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DACHAU

If Danny could or would imagine what it cost me to write my experience in KZ. DACHAU not in money but in nerves and sleepless nights, he would no insist that I write it down. I do not know is it his kriek to know, or is it his curiosity but I try to do him this favour.

end of november 0

It was a very cold day in December 1938, when we arrived in DACHAU.

The S.S. with there furious dogs and civilians – this were the KAPOS – lined the way from the train to the gate. It did not look to bad, it was nice and clean only they forced us to do everything running and when not fast enough a strike with a rubber hose or a push with the rifle gave the necessary speed. It was not the nicest welcome. In the first building all the pockets had to be emptied, no money, watches pp were allowed to keep, we had to undress, take a shower – they were later changed to killing gas chambers – and received streiped pyjamas and wooden shoes. You had to take them as they came, fitting or not. We had to exchange them later between us, to get them „about" fitting. Our clothes were put in a bag with a number which you had to remember. How the interior of the barracks looked, you know from pictures. No heat, no comfort, nothing than a plain wood-construction to sleep on. The primitive toilet and wash installations in an other building. No W.C paper only the „Völkischer Beobachter" the Nazi Haus-paper. There was in my opinion no better use for this paper. Everything had to be done running no slow pace in the camp. The use of the „REST" room was only for a few minutes because there were to many waiting

Alarm 5 a.m. only ½ hour to get up, wash and breakfast. 5^{30} am everybody

on the Appellplace to be counted. As they could not count in the dark, we had to stand still to about 8^{30}/9^{00} always watched by the SS that nobody did the gentles move, or he was reminded with a stroke from the rubber hose or the rifle. Whoever fell down, was beaten until he got up or was recognizable only as a heap of bloody pyjamas. If you wanted to help this poor fellow - who might have wife and children at home - you joined him in the same punishment. Sometimes we had to stand for hours. All this was repeated in the evening. As the Kapos never could count correct this was repeated 3-4 times.

We had also to stand and watch the execution of a prisoner brought back after an unsuccessful escape. This was extra prolonged to warn everybody to try an escape.

I shared a transparent blanket full with vermin on the plain floor - no matterasses - with Oberlandesgerichtsrat FRANKEN (Düsseldorf)

Our food was miserable, a plate of soup, if you could call this soup one piece of bread, same for lunch and in the evening. Once we got a potatoes and a herring as he came out of the ocean with scales & everything. Eat this without knife, fork we eat this like the animals, so what they would like to bring us. We starved, to break our will & thinking. One thing I will never forget. There was a little store in the camp - run by the SS - where we could buy little things - Cigarettes, food a.s.o. Franken went there, because he had some money and instead of buying food he bought a dose of shoecreme, to clean the shoes we had no more. People did the strangest thing. When I asked Franken - he returned to Düsseldorf after the war to the same job he had before Hitler - to send me confirmation that I was in Dachau it was for my restitution he declined he did not wanted to be reminded on the days in Dachau.

In the beginning of our stay in Dachau the S.S. was looking for people of K.Z. I in the rang of an officer to exercise other prisoner, but after a few days I was released of this duty as no Jew could command other people.
The treatment and the food we received convinced us more every day that all what they did was a way to kill us one or the other way. If our loved ones at home could not get us out of this living hell, there was only one way: To run against the electric wire fence to end all the trouble. And you could find this solution about every day that one of the prisoner could not stand it anymore and took this way to end the horrors of working hard and all the mistreatment and watching the hanging of a captured fugitive.
working to exhaustion to carry stones or pushing a wheelbarrow full to the top from A to B and than from B to A back, all under severe beating.
This was the occasion where I lost my toes, smashed with a rifleknott of a kapo.
The Kapos were the ward guardians, the abominablest selection of the human race, criminals with only the interest of bribes and torture.
What the S.S. ordered or did had all an sadistic background to hurt the inmates. -
We were allowed to get mail, distributed at the Appelplace. Mieze and the children sent me a letter for my birthday. They gave me only the envelope - empty - no letter
Undernourished, maltreatment, always the fear of this unhuman barbaron treatment, unsanitary environment, the hard treatment, the uncertain feeling what will be our fate, not knowing what happened to our wifes and children was absolutely destructive and demoralized our life and this was what the Nazis wanted to kill the persons and specially the Jews.
It was a tremendous strain to keep the hope and mind together. Only the convincing thought that Mieze was working for me with all her energy

gave me the hope and the energy to get out of this misere and to get hope to her and the children.
The environment, the smell, the food, everything was arranged for our distruction You read this and think this was not so bad, but all the things combined could cost you your common sense. The dead, the sick, the loneliness in spite of the thousands of people around you increased the despair of your thinking and I could understand the people who tried to find solace on the electric fence.
This all are thoughts who follow me day and night (still after 50 years)
May be you will understand now, that I do not like to talk about this, because I have than the concentration camp with all his fearful terror before my eyes. This impression will never disappear no matter where I go and what I do.
DENK ICH AN DEUTSCHLAND IN DER NACHT, BIN ICH UM MEINEN SCHLAF GEBRACHT (HEINRICH HEINE)
When I think about Germany in the night, my sleep disappears (HEINRICH HEINE)
You can change „Deutschland" with „KZ" or accept both words

Yours,

Leicester 18th of February 1992